

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1632

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALEXANDRIA 0190

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT EG

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT OF THE WAFD PARTY IN ALEXANDRIA

1. ALTHOUGH THE ORGANIZATION OF THE WAFD PARTY IN EGYPT IS STILL IN ITS EARLY STAGES, IT IS A SUBJECT OF LIVELY INTEREST IN ALEXANDRIA. AFTER MANY YEARS WHEN DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL IDEAS OTHER THAN THOSE PUT FORWARD BY THE GOVERNMENT WAS DISCOURAGED, ALEXANDRIANS ARE BEGINNING TO TALK MORE FREELY AND TAKE AN INTEREST IN THE NEW PARTY.

2. IT APPEARS THAT ACTIVITY DIRECTED TOWARD A LOCAL WAFD PARTY ORGANIZATION IS ALREADY UNDERWAY. THOSE MOST ACTIVE IN THIS WORK ARE REPORTEDLY THOSE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THAT VOTED IN SUPPORT OF THE FOUNDING OF THE WAFD PARTY. ACTIVITY AT THIS TIME APPEARS TO BE CENTERED AMONG THE INTELLIGENTSIA, ESPECIALLY LAWYERS, DOCTORS, AND OTHER LOCAL INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE.

3. ONE KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVER EXPLAINED THAT HE BELIEVED THE WAFD PARTY WILL ATTRACT MANY SUPPORTERS JUST BECAUSE IT IS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE GOVERNMENT SPONSORED PARTY. HE THOUGHT NEW MEMBERS WOULD INCLUDE VARIOUS POLITICAL SHADINGS, MANY OF WHOM MIGHT LATER WITHDRAW FROM THE WAFD PARTY IF OTHER PARTIES WHICH REPRESENTED THEIR POLITICAL THINKING MORE CLOSELY WERE ESTABLISHED.

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ISHED IN THE FUTURE. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE BROAD APPEAL THAT THE PARTY'S PUBLISHED PRINCIPLES MAKE SHOULD GAIN IT THE SUPPORT OF MANY OF THE LOCAL RANK AND FILE.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND DR. FAROUK GARRANA, CHAIRMAN OF THE ALEXANDRIA ORGANIZATION OF THE MISR PARTY, DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE WAFD PARTY WOULD BE A SEVERE CHALLENGE TO THE MISR PARTY IN

ALEXANDRIA, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. ALTHOUGH HE ADMITTED THAT THE WAFD PARTY WILL PROBABLY BE SECOND IN IMPORTANCE TO THE MISR PARTY, HERE, I.E. MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE OTHER PARTIES FORMERLY IN THE ASU, HE SAW DIFFICULTIES FACING IT IN GAINING WIDE MEMBERSHIP, ESPECIALLY FROM THE "MAN ON THE STREET" WHO, HE SAID, BELIEVES WHAT HE READS IN THE NEWSPAPERS, I.E. GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED STATEMENTS, AND WHAT HE HEARS ON GOVERNMENT SPONSORED RADIO AND TV. HE FELT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THE WAFD OR OTHER NON-GOVERNMENT SPONSORED PARTIES TO REACH ENOUGH PEOPLE AND THUS GAIN ENOUGH ADHERENTS TO CHALLENGE THE MISR PARTY CONTROL.

5. COMMENT: FROM VARIOUS SOURCES IT IS APPARENT THAT ACTIVITY TO FORM A LOCAL WAFD PARTY ORGANIZATION IS UNDERWAY, BUT LITTLE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE SO FAR TO INDICATE HOW FAR IT HAS PROCEEDED OR HOW SUCCESSFUL IT HAS BEEN. HOPEFULLY, CONTACTS WITH DEPUTIES FROM LOCAL DISTRICTS WILL GIVE US A BETTER READING IN THE FUTURE. MCCLELLAND

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